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**Naturalization: The case for constitutional reform to  
 extend citizenship to immigrant in Liberia**

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**Abstract.** This study examines critical elements of extending citizenship to entrepreneurial minority groups (Lebanese, Mandingos, Indians, Nigerians, and Westerners) and Liberian dual citizens in Liberia by analyzing survey, remittance, and naturalization data collected by Afrobarometer (Round 5 and 6 Surveys), USD Explorer, 2015 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics, and TLC Africa from 2011 to 2015. This is accomplished by correlating associations between variables including Liberians' gender in survey responses, attitudes of West African countries, Liberian naturalization in advanced countries, and Liberia's remittances (inflow and outflow) to show the economic advantages of awarding citizenship to foreigners. The long run result reveals that attracting entrepreneurial groups increases investment in new domestic firms, which will likely lead to transformation in national industries, enhancement of citizens' technical skills, creation of permanent employment, and improvement of citizens' living standards, as well as increased democratization.

**Keywords.** Immigrants, Entrepreneurial minority groups, Discrimination, Economic, Indigenous.


**JEL.** J15, K37, L26.


## 1. Introduction

The intense debate about extending citizenship to a range of nationalities has revealed Liberians' often hostile attitudes toward Lebanese, Mandingos, Liberian dual citizens, Indians, and Westerners. This behavior is not unique to Liberians. The feeling of denying citizenship to foreigners is deeply rooted among populations in some West African states like Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria, Benin, Togo, Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. This resentment against foreigners (or other nationalities) can be partly attributed to the African experience with colonial occupation, land confiscation, and homogenization by European colonialists and, in Liberia, to freed American Blacks (Gobewole, 2016b; Liebenow, 1987; Sawyer, 1992). The deep historical roots of mistreatment have created distrust among Africans, and particularly Liberians, for foreigners and made them to develop a defensive mechanism that results in denying other nationalities citizenship. Fear of outsiders also seems to have a deeper social/psychological basis in humans, as we're currently seeing in the United States. However, such a discrimination has economic implications for developing nations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century because individuals from a variety of national backgrounds have essential skills and capital to invest in new firms, create jobs, and improve the standard of living.

The Lebanese and Mandingos are both groups that own major firms and generate most of the private sector activities in Liberia's economy. As in most of sub-Saharan Africa, the Lebanese, Indians, and Western entrepreneurs own the majority of the private sector entities, such as retail stores (supermarkets, cloths,

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house materials, basic tools, etc.), manufacturing companies (liquor, textile, footwear, cement, etc.), and infrastructure entities (road construction, residential and commercial buildings, communication networks, new technologies, etc.). Amy Chua described the situation in her book *World on Fire*. “Of all the world’s regions, scarcity-stricken Africa has the greatest abundance and variety of market-dominant minorities. Some of these minorities are indigenous Africans. Others are “entrepreneurial” immigrant groups like the Indians or Lebanese. Still others are former European colonizers. All are deeper resented and, at time, the objects of homicidal fury” (Chua, 2003).

These minorities also supply durable goods like automobiles, motto bikes, refrigerators, air-conditions, televisions, and cell phones for the population, specifically the political and economic elite. The Mandingois one of Liberia’s oldest ethnic groups, acting as merchants of consumer goods. To this day, the Mandingos travel the country, including both rural and urban regions, to trade agriculture produce and African merchandise for European goods with tribal and Americo-Liberian communities, as they have done since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, the Mandingos are known today for dominating Liberia’s transportation, gold, and diamond industries. This means that the Lebanese and Mandingo (who usually serve as middlemen in the retail sector) communities own a large percentage of Liberia’s wealth, which generate resentment among the populace.

The strong Liberian and West African attitude of rejecting citizenship to outside groups is measured and quantified by the Afrobarometer Round 5 Survey in 2015. An operational question, “Right to be citizen: hold dual citizenship,” was asked of adult Liberians, Guineans, Ivoirians, Benin, Togolese, Nigerians, Ghanaians, and Sierra Leoneans to determine their attitudes about extending citizenship to foreigners. The survey result uncovered their overwhelming rejection to extending citizenship to Liberians with dual citizenship (United States, United Kingdom, etc.) or other nationalities (Afrobarometer Round 5 Survey, 2015). Liberians’ attitudes and their constitutional mandate that discourages integration and naturalization of migrants as citizens has adverse economic implications. This policy leads to enormous outflow of financial resources (remittance) which could be used for new business ventures in Liberia. A statistical report on inflow and outflow remittance (funds send from Liberia through Western Union and Money-Gram) underscores the point.

The pro-immigration policies instituted by some developed countries, most prominently the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Germany, is partly responsible for expanding and improving their economies. Of course, today these policies are diminished in the United States with President Donald Trump’s “zero tolerance” immigration policy. However, in general pro-immigration policy is a critical strategy used by advanced countries, for instance leading to the founding by immigrants of top United States companies such as Tesla, Google, and eBay.

The attitude of denying citizenship to foreigners might have been a positive characteristic (for instance, for preventing homogenization of indigenous tribes) at other periods in Liberian history, such as the Americo-Liberian period or during colonial rule. However, this attitude has unintended economic consequences for a developing country like Liberia that is trying to enhance its citizens’ productive capability, transform its industrial structure, and develop its economy. Adam Smith discussed how citizens’ productivity leads to economic development in *The Wealth of Nations*.

The annual labour of every nation is the fund which originally supplies it with all the necessities and conveniences of life which it annually consumes, and which consist always either in the immediate produce of that labour, or in what is purchased with that produce from other nations. According therefore, as this produce, or what is purchased with it, bears a greater or smaller proportion to the number of those who are to consume it, the nation will be better or worse supplied with all the necessities and conveniences for which it has occasion. But this

proportion must in every nation be regulated by two different circumstances; first, by the skill, dexterity, and judgment with which its labour is generally applied; and, secondly, by the proportion between the number of those who are employed in useful labour, and that of those who are not so employed (Smith, 1776, p. xv).

It is therefore important to encourage migration by skilled laborers and entrepreneurs for a nation to develop.

In other words, Liberia should consider awarding citizenship to its entrepreneurial minorities, people with dual citizenship, and individuals with other nationalities. This approach will assist it to preserve essential financial resources (outflow of remittance from Liberia) for reinvestment, ignite economic growth, and improve citizens' standard of living.

## 2. Literature review

There is extensive scholarly knowledge about indigenous tribal groups on Africa's Grain Coast (today's Sierra Leone and Liberia), their interaction with repatriated Freed American Blacks (Americo-Liberians), and their negative experience with land deliberation with settlers. The sub-region (partly today's Liberia and Sierra Leone) was scarcely settled until approximately the eighth century (Liebenow, 1987). The area was predominantly a tropical rain forest, which made it difficult for native tribes to efficiently perform sustainable farming. Sawyer (1992) stated that "Heavy rainfall has had a devastating effect on the soil of the sub-region. The dominant soil type is lateritic, which is highly susceptible to leaching during the rainy seasons and to 'hardpan' formation during the dry seasons. Such soils are not suitable for agriculture" (p. 44). The indigenous ethnic groups migrated to the region anyway because "the Western Sudanic trading empire" extended its commercial network to the Mande people's area (Liebenow, 1987). Amos Sawyer suggested an additional reason for indigenous migration to the sub-region in his book *The Emergence of Autocracy in Liberia: Tragedy and Challenge*. "Two major developments in the late fifteenth and early sixteen centuries had a tremendous impact on the entire region of Western Sudan. The first was the disintegration of the Mali Empire; the second was the arrival of European traders along the coast. The breakup of the Mali Empire created disturbances in the savanna area for the next two centuries, disturbances that pushed peripheral groups deeper and deeper into the tropical rain forest" (Sawyer, 1992).

Both trade and conflict increased the population of this area, despite its unsuitability for agriculture.

However, the different ethnic groups of the Mande language did not develop social, economic, and political alignment until the late 16<sup>th</sup> century, a period that was "marked by regular expeditions of Manding traders into the region" (Liebenow, 1987). At the same time, several waves of Mande, Kwa, and Mel linguistic groups immigrated to the sub-region, specifically Liberia. Sixteen ethnic tribes eventually settled in the area that became Liberia (even though some scholars will say 28 ethnic tribes, depending on how they are divided). The population census of 1962 list these 16 tribes as Kpelle, Bassa, Gio, Kru, Grebo, Mano, Loma, Krahn, Gola, Kissi, Mandingo, Vai, Gbandi, Belle, Dei, and Mende (Liebenow, 1969; Liberia Government Population Census, 1962). This point is underscored because a few ethnic tribes (from the Kwa linguistic group, the Bassa, Belle, and Dei), "are found almost entirely within Liberia" (Liebenow, 1969). J. Gus Liebenow discussed the indigenous ethnic groups' migration to the sub-region in his book *Liberia: The Quest for Democracy*.

Based on archaeological, linguistic, medical, and ethnological data, recent scholars have suggested a general migration of the present-day Gola and Kissi into western Liberia at a fairly early period, roughly between the 1300s to 1700s. <sup>3</sup> This was followed by the movement of the Dei, Bassa, Krahn, Kru, and Grebo in a westward-southward direction out of their earlier homes in the Ivory Coast and beyond. The Dei, Svend Holsoe suggests, reached the Mano River on Liberia's present western boundary before 1500s, followed closely by the Vai. Migration,

however, was a dynamic phenomenon and some early arrivals in the coastal region—such as the Belle and Krahn—moved northward, while others—such as the Kru, Bassa, and Dei—spread further out along the Atlantic littoral. It is possible that four or five centuries ago much of what is today Sierra Leone and Liberia was largely uninhabited tropical rain forest (Liebenow, 1987, p. 31).

It took centuries for the dispersal of tribes found today to develop.

In most West African customs, specifically the sub-region, land is a tribe's primary asset, used for hunting, fishing, farming, and its forest for performing cultural rituals and making tools. Sawyer (1992) stated that "In spite of the political communities' persistent shifts in location, land was the basic fabric in their existence. Land was the bond linking the ancestors with the present and the future. Association with it defined the community and legitimized its institutions" (p. 55). These activities are conducted collectively, as tribal groups, by pooling labor, material, risk, and other resources to acquire essential produce, such as food, cloth, and housing, to sustain their communities. Liebenow explained how the Kuu (tribal work group) system functioned among some Liberian tribal communities (Mano, Kpelle, etc.) in his *Liberia: The Evolution of Privilege*. "A kuu consisted of households who combined: for the purpose of working in rotation on the farms of members, because they believed that they worked harder and with more enjoyment when in a group. Kuus could be of men, women, or mixed. A household would contribute as many members as it was able....Kuuwere formed newly each season and were involved in such work as clearing forest, scratching, planting and harvesting" (Liebenow, 1969).

The working of land is thus bound by local tradition, binding tribes together while providing for their needs.

This tradition is partly the reason tribal communities hold land, their most valuable asset, in communal trusts that are administered by tribal, clan, or paramount chiefs. Despite the customary land holding, the Americo-Liberian oligarchy instituted policies to confiscate (or grab) large tracts of indigenous tribal communities' land (Liebenow, 1969; Sawyer, 1992). Gobewole (2016b) stated that "Retitling the land of tribal communities, reselling it to Americo-Liberians, and giving some to concession companies, including Firestone, Semi Darby, Salala Rubber Corporation, and Sinoe Rubber Corporation, denied tribal people an ability to cultivate cash crops, such as oranges, pineapples, bananas, cocoa, and coffee (p.46). This experience makes it understandable that the descendants of indigenous tribal people--the majority of today's Liberian citizens—are distrustful of authority figures and fearful of extending citizenship to other nationalities, especially if Liberians suspect that these groups might eventually purchase their land and acquire political influence. However, pro-immigration policies toward skillful individuals from advanced countries are essential forestablishing domestic firms, disseminating technical knowledge, and transforming Liberia's industries.

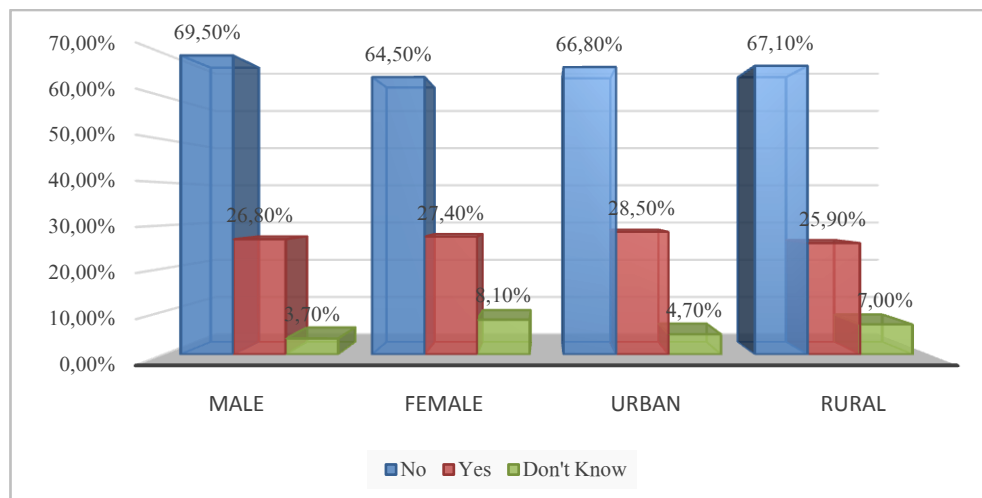
### 3. Methodology

The argument that Liberians overwhelmingly reject citizenship for foreign nationals, entrepreneurial minority groups, and Liberian dual citizens, and that this prevents growth in Liberia, is supported by survey and economic data gathered and compiled by Afrobarometer (Africa-Based), USDExplorer, 2015 Yearbook (U.S.-Based), and TLC Africa Statistics on West Africans. These nongovernmental entities' reports provide information about levels of some Liberian attitudes about extension of citizenship, and about flow of remittances and migration statistics in Liberia. This information, in turn, was used to measure correlations among indicators of investment resources, naturalization rates, and citizenship expansion to determine trends toward constitutional reform, while documenting the state of Liberia's economy. In addition, this statistical analysis allowed the study to show the strength or weakness of Liberian citizens' attitudes about awarding foreigners and Liberian dual citizens citizenship. Low resistance to incorporating ethnic outsiders is essential for Liberia to offer citizenship to foreign national and

Liberian dual citizens. The figures gathered are also used to create charts and tables to assist readers to better understand the citizenship and investment resources phenomena discussed in the study.

#### 4. Data analysis and finding

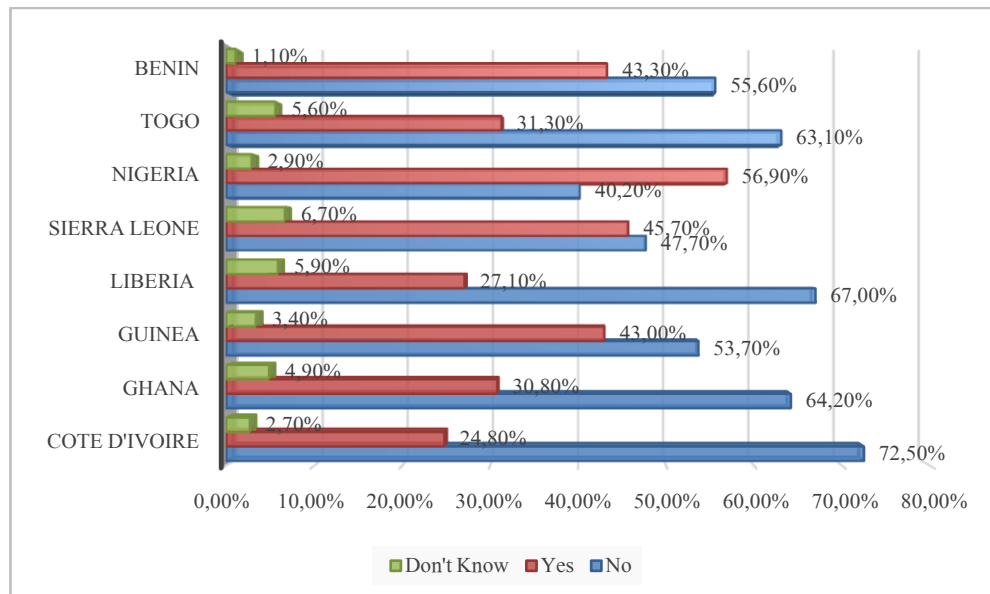
The discussion about extending citizenship to entrepreneurial minority groups in Liberia has become personal and divisive. Most Liberians are against giving Lebanese, Mandingos, Indians, and Westerners, and Liberian dual citizens (individuals with American, British, Canadian, etc., citizenship) citizenship in the nation. A survey conducted by Afrobarometer in 2015 revealed that Liberians do not want citizenship given to foreigners based on marriage (59.1%) or birth of a foreigner's child (52.1%). However, 71.8% of the "survey respondents preferred citizenship for children of a foreigner and a Liberian" citizen (Afrobarometer Round 5 Survey, 2015; Gobewole, 2016b), showing that under certain conditions Liberians are willing to extend citizenship to foreigners. For example, in the case of a Liberian and an immigrant having an off-spring, a large percent of the population is open to awarding those children citizenship. Therefore, proponents of granting citizenship should leverage that opportunity and lobby congress for legislation to legalize that population. The critical point here is that for Liberians or West Africans extending citizenship to other nationalities will be gradual, while they build trust and confidence in foreigners. Gobewole (2016b) states that "This information is critical, because economically advanced nations like the U.S. award citizenship based on birth in the country or on one's parents being naturalized citizens" (p. 123). Moreover, the United States has policies in place to attract new immigrants to replenish its labor force and maintain its innovative competitiveness.



**Graph 1.**  
*Right to be citizen: hold dual citizenship - Liberia*

On the other hand, the survey also revealed that 66.4% of adult Liberian citizens were against the extension of full citizenship to people who have "hold dual citizenship" for Liberians with American, British, Canadian, or other nationalities (Afrobarometer Round 5 Survey, 2015). This is particularly important because holding "dual citizenship" is attributed to entrepreneurial minorities who are citizens of another nation. Chart-1 reflects that this belief in denying citizenship to foreigners is almost equally exhibited by adult males (69.5%), adult females (64.5%), urban citizens (66.8%), and rural citizens (67.1%), respectively.



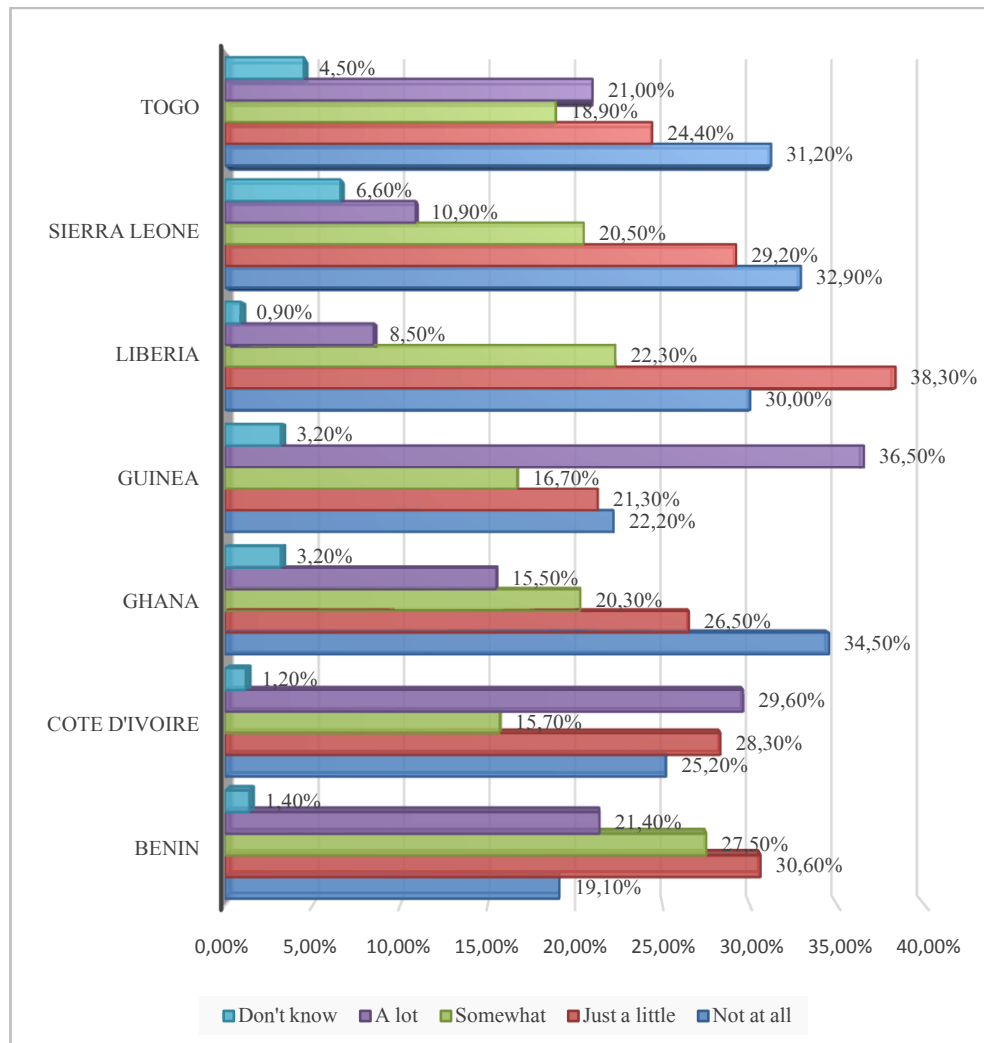


Graph 2.

*Right to be citizen: hold dual citizenship – West African nation*

Graph 2 reveals a similar attitude of Liberia in denying citizenship to foreigners (individuals with dual citizenship) in other West African nations. The extension of citizenship to individuals from entrepreneurial minority groups with other nationalities is rejected by Ivoirians (72.5%), Ghanaians (64.2%), Guineans (53.7%), Liberians (67.0%), Nigerians (40.2%), Togolese (63.1%), Beninian (55.6%) and Sierra Leoneans (47.7%), respectively.

This unanimous objection to awarding citizenship to foreigners, entrepreneurial minority groups, or individuals with dual citizenship is partly attributed to West Africans experience with enslavement and colonialism, which led to Europeans kidnapping millions of Africans and grabbing of enormous tracts of land on the continent. With this horrific event in the historical memory, paranoia about outsiders lingers. For instance, the location of the Aja tribe of West Africa's homeland--today's Benin, Togo, and Nigeria--made them a victim of the Transatlantic Slave Trade. Thereby, their descendants developed and exhibited distrust--a defensive trait to protect against foreign oppressors--for clansmen and European slave traders alike (Easterly, 2013). This section of West Africa is directly opposite, and approximately 1800 miles apart from, Brazil (across the Atlantic Ocean). This geography made it feasible for European slave traders to acquire indigenous tribal people, in this case the Aja people, for sale as slaves to sugar cane and cotton plantation owners in the Americas, the Caribbean, and Europe (Easterly, 2013; Gobewole, 2016b). Easterly (2013) stated that "This part of Africa did not even have that much of a development foundation to build on, since the slave trade had destroyed people's trust even in their own kin groups" (p. 162). There is a high level of distrust currently present among the West African descendants of those indigenous populations.



**Graph 3.**  
*Trust parliament/national assembly – West African Nations*

Graph 3 reveals that 49.7% of Beninians, 53.5% of Ivoirians, 61.0% of Ghanaians, 43.5% of Guineans, 68.3% of Liberians, 62.1% of Sierra Leoneans, and 55.6% of Togolese possess “not at all” and “just a little” trust in their representatives in parliament, congress, or national assembly. In other words, the primary source of enormous distrust for middlemen (usually other kin groups), European slave traders, and foreign nationals by Africans is the institution of slavery.

Beyond distrust of immigrants, distrust of officials by West Africans remains an economic hindrance. Graph 3 shows a low degree of trust among many West African populations for their public representatives. This is quite telling since the population elected the public officials, can monitor their performance (effective implementation of campaign promises), and can hold them accountable during elections. The effect demonstrates how critical minimizing distrust is to resolving conflicts, extending citizenship, and igniting economic growth in Liberia and Africa. A high level of trust among populations has positive implications for a society’s political and economic well-being, as Francis Fukuyama discussed in his book *Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity*.

It is no accident that the United States, Japan, and Germany were the first countries to develop large, modern, rationally organized, professionally managed corporations. Each of these cultures had certain characteristics that allowed business organizations to move beyond the family rather rapidly and to create a

variety of new, voluntary social groups that were not based on kinship. They were able to do so.... because in each of these societies there was a high degree of trust between individuals who were not related to one another, and hence a solid basis for social capital (Fukuyama, 1995, p.57).

The root of any society's success is in individuals' trust and commitment for each other and ability to form institutions.

Adam Smith (1759) discusses such an ability to form bonds outside the family as part of the genesis for economic success, stating "that to feel much for others and little for ourselves, that to restrain our selfishness, and to indulge our benevolent affections, constitutes the perfection of human nature" (p. 32). To some extent, this system is consistent with African tradition as indicated by the culture farming practice of Kuu. In theory, the strategy can be easily adopted by Africans. Therefore, Liberians and Africans should immediately begin to embrace this moral concept while changing their attitude about extending citizenship to other nationalities.

### *Chi-square test*

A Chi-square test was performed to determine if Liberian males and females differ statistically in their objections to extending citizenship to people who hold dual citizenship. A review of the actual (or observed) data suggested that most Liberians are likely to reject giving citizenship to individuals with dual citizenship. The assumption (prior to performing the test) was that no differences existed within the sample Liberian population. In other words, the study expected to see equal rates (66.89%) of male and female objection (but was not) to awarding citizenship to people who hold dual citizenship. However, the Chi-square test result (P-value of 0.0038) is less than the study's confidence level of 0.05. Therefore, there is sufficient evidence to conclude that Liberian males and females in the sample population have statistically significant differences, even though they both object to awarding citizenship.

## 5. Theoretical framework

The fear of losing land--the primary source of economic security and political influence--that Liberian citizens exhibit is rooted in their experience with freed American Blacks (Americo-Liberians) and the culture tradition of land ownership (customary property rights). The first group of freed American Blacks arrived in 1791 and named their landing place Freetown (which became the capital city of Sierra Leone). The second group came in 1821, eventually ending up on Bushrod Island, a section of today's Monrovia, the capital of Liberia (Liebenow, 1969). Simon Schama discussed the distinct difference between the two groups' treatment of indigenous tribal people in his book *Rough Crossings: The Slaves, the British, and the American Revolution*.

When the Anti-Slave Society of New York published a biography of Granville Sharp in 1846 the author, Charles Stuart, went out of his way to distinguish the foundation of Sierra Leone from the efforts of the American Colonization Society to transport free negroes to Liberia. In the British case, Stuart implied, settlement was harbinger of abolition; in the American case it was a pernicious alternative to it: *love*, impartial brotherly Christian love, was the source of Sierra Leone. Hatred and contempt for *color*... were the great source... of Liberia... The settlement of Sierra Leone cherished the best feelings of the English nation--sympathy for the oppressed, and benevolence towards desolate strangers, whom the proud world spurned and persecuted. The founder of Liberia cherished the worst feelings of the people of the United States; the idol-sin which distinguishes them from all other civilized people, *color hatred*... Stuart exaggerated the virtues of the British and the vices of the Americans (Schama, 2005, p.411).

Neither the British nor Americans, then, had the welfare of the free Blacks as their foremost concern.

The most important thing to understand is that the newcomers had to occupy indigenous tribal groups' homelands. Gobewole (2016b) stated "Once Liberia was



established, Americo-Liberians used the state's power to systematically transfer tribal land to public land and then to deeded land [document holding] to make it available for purchase by the ruling oligarchy" (p. 65). In general, indigenous tribes of Africa's sub-region (today's Liberia) have a long-standing tradition of not divesting of their land. Johnson (1987) stated that, for native tribes, "Land tenure and ownership... is complex, the basis of native ownership is communal; in contrast, that of European culture is individualistic" (p.86). J. Gus Liebenow discussed this African principle of protecting land in *Liberia: The Quest for Democracy*: "Hostility between the Americo-Liberians community and the tribal people had been a feature of Liberian society almost from the first settlers' arrival. At the heart of the conflict had been the issue of land. The initial misunderstanding was over the traditional African concept of land tenure, which is based upon use rather than ownership through purchase" (Liebenow, 1987).

Land is at the core of every political and economic discussion in Liberia. Therefore, the extension of citizenship to entrepreneurial minorities that is underpinned by their eventual land ownership is no different. This situation brings back memories of freed American Black (Americo-Liberian) mistreatment of indigenous people, free use of their labor, and illegal acquisition of their customary land holding from the inception of the nation. Charles Johnson discussed some of the initial interaction between an indigenous tribal group (in the sub-region) and foreigners in his book *Bitter Canaan: The Story of the Negro Republic*.

"The coast Krus have been longest in contact with the white man and were among the first to resist the coming of the colonist. Throughout the first century of Liberian history they were in opposition. They regarded themselves as the true owners of the country and more than once tried to throw off the rule of their Black lord. In each case the colony was saved from possible extermination at the hands of natives by the intervention of the United States" (Johnson, 1987). This experience has made it difficult for descendants of indigenous tribal groups (most of today's Liberian citizens) to gain trust and confidence in a law, extension of citizenship to entrepreneurial minorities, that will eventually give new immigrants land rights. Such fears, dating back to the indigenous encounter with freed American Blacks in the 1800s, are easy to understand.

However, reforms in Liberia's land laws during President Johnson-Sirleaf's administration make it difficult to easily transfer customary or public land to private land as the Americo-Liberian oligarchy did in the past. This was partly the source of enormous conflict after the Liberian civil war ended in 2004. Gerald D. Yeakula and Shine G. Williams discussed these land laws reforms in their study *Land and Corruption Report: Liberia*.

Notably, the causes of the war were multiple. However, central to it (if not a direct trigger) was conflict over land and natural resource rights. These included issues over customary ownership, ethnic land disputes, and issues stemming from poor land administration systems and capacity. As a result, timber and diamonds were used to finance the war, prompting United Nations sanctions against these resources. A new national forestry law was passed. Among other things, it decreed that forest resources, as distinguished from forest lands, belonged to the state. Consequently, all forest concessions were cancelled; rubber concessions were renegotiated; a Land Commission was established in 2009 to set policy for customary ownership and tenure security, improved land-administration and development of land resources, and more (Yeakula & Williams, 2018, p. 39).

These reforms were intended to avoid further exploitation of natural resources by outside interests and corrupt politicians.

The Liberian government recognition of this weak land administration system and its institution of new standards to govern land ownership led to enactment of new laws, including the policy on land categories, accompanying rights, and responsibilities of 2013, the criminal conveyance land act of 2014, and the Liberia Land Authority of 2016 (Yeakula *et al.*, 2018). These laws will make it difficult for

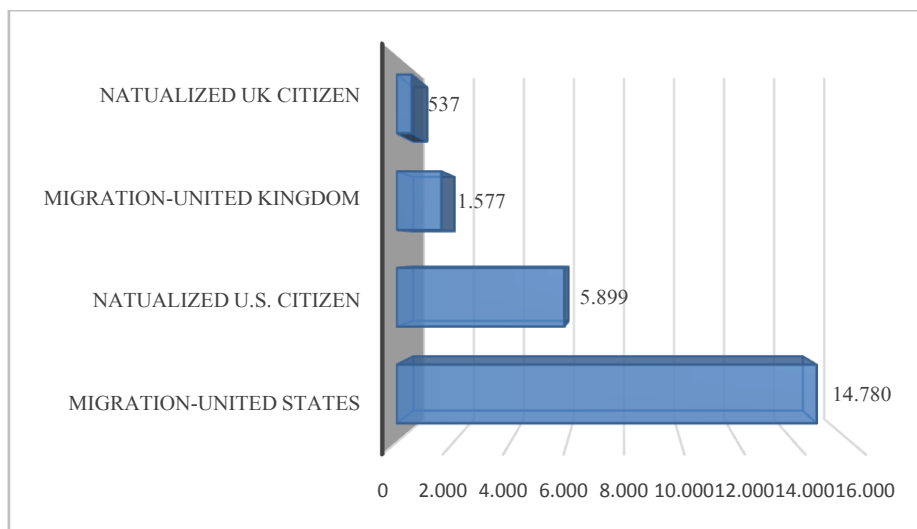
entrepreneurial minorities (or any other groups) who are awarded citizenship to purchase large tracts of land, amass their political power, and enhance their economic influence. In addition, this new regime partly eliminates existing authority that gave Liberia's president sole right to sell customary and public lands. Jairo Munive Rincon explained some of Liberia's previous land laws: "The ownership of land rested with the national government; all un-deeded land, including land occupied by indigenous peoples, was public land. In consequence, the government was the sole legal vendor of land and it could not be purchased directly from indigenous peoples. The ultimate arbiter of the acquisition of the deeding of the land was the president" (Rincon, 2010). Liberian citizens should be mindful of this kind of presidential power, because it gives absolute authority to sell the nation's land by an individual at will to family members, friends, and political supporters. In other words, previous presidents used this law to grab enormous amounts of customary land from indigenous tribal communities. Gobewole (2016b) states that "Grabbing the tribal lands by the Americo-Liberians became so disgraceful that President Tubman, one of the primary enablers, cautioned the Americo-Liberian oligarchy in his 1964 inaugural address about a potential adverse effect from future educated tribal generations" (p.56). This prediction is being fulfilled. In general, Africans have a legitimate fear of their lands being taking by foreigners, since for centuries, Westerners (Americans, Britons, French, Germans, Belgians, etc.) have grabbed African land to establish colonies for extraction of raw agriculture materials and natural resources for their industries.

## 6. Noncitizen Liberians

### 6.1. Liberian dual citizens

Strong rejection of citizenship for other nationalities has resulted in unintended consequence for Liberians who have naturalized in advanced countries. Notably, the acquisition of U.S. citizenship by certain Liberians automatically makes them dual citizens of both the U.S. and Liberia, thereby putting them in the peculiar position of being threatened with abolishment of citizenship in their native homeland. In other words, these Liberian dual citizens now face the same predicament as foreigners or entrepreneurial minority groups.

The critical issue is that this segment of the population is growing exponentially because every Liberian--or West African for that matter--jumps at the opportunity to go to the United States or the United Kingdom, become naturalized, and improve their financial situation.

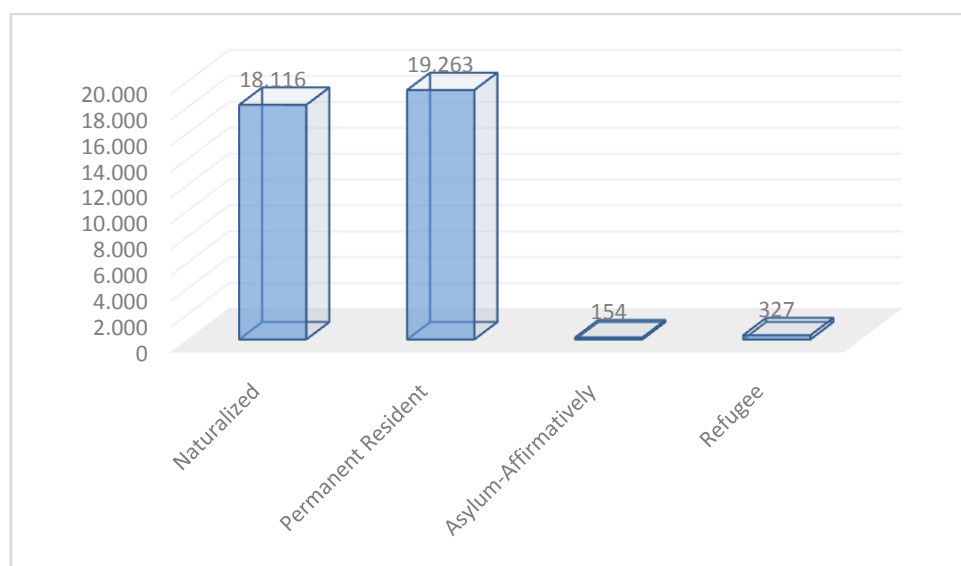


Graph 4.

*Liberians Migration and Naturalization in the U.S. and the UK 1997-2003*

Graph 4 reveals that the number of Liberians who migrated to the United States and the United Kingdom between 1997 and 2003 were 14,780 and 1,577, respectively. Those immigrants' rate of naturalization was 40% (5,899) in the United States and 34% (537) in the United Kingdom. These figures indicate that a high proportion of Liberian immigrants are acquiring citizenship in the developed world. The acquisition of citizenship in advanced countries is a method people from developing countries apply to achieve economic success. Therefore, it can be expected that more Liberians will leverage such opportunity if presented. For example, approximately 110,589 Liberians lived in the U.S. in 2003.

This means that the number of Liberian dual citizens is certainly going to increase in the future. As a result, the Liberian government needs to promptly institute a legislative solution. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security annual report "2015 Year book of Immigration Statistics" indicates that "naturalizations refer to persons aged 18 and over who become citizens of the United States." This legislation status (naturalized citizen) is increasingly acquired by Liberians identified as Permanent Residents, Refugees, and Asylum in the U.S. between 2011 and 2015.



**Graph 5.**  
*Liberians Legalization in the United States Between 2011 and 2015*

The statistics reflected on Chart-5 revealed a rising trend in Permanent Resident (19,263), which will usually lead to Naturalized (18,116) America, while Asylum (154) and Refugee (327) are low. This will potentially result in an increase in Liberians acquiring dual citizenship (or American citizenship).

More important, these Liberian dual citizens are mostly responsible for large amount of remittance inflow (U.S. dollars) to Liberia annually. Stated differently, Liberians with dual citizenship--Lebanese, Mandingos, Indians, and Western business people--are partly funders of investment ventures (construction projects, retail initiatives, street vendors, etc.) in Liberia's economy. Therefore, the Liberian congress should promptly enact legislation that extends citizenship to incentivize these groups.

Most developing nations, specifically in Africa, should mimic the U.S. approach to extending citizenship to immigrants (at least prior to the Trump presidency). Stated differently, a poor country like Liberia should be instituting immigration policies (relating to family reunification, birth of an immigrant and a citizen's child, domestic technical firm owners, etc.) like America's to encourage talented immigrants to invest their acquired wealth in Liberia's economy rather

than sending it as remittances to their original homeland. These financial resources can be appropriately reinvested to start new businesses, lower the inflation rate, and partly assist in igniting Liberia's economic growth. Such entrepreneurial activities will lead to the enhancement of technical knowledge among Liberian workers and a transformation of its industrial structure (Gobewole, 2016b). Gobewole (2017) stated that "a learned or educated citizenry and their nation are poised to better manage and navigate the current knowledge-based economy to their advantage" (p. 163). This is the kind of industrial strategy that made and is sustaining the U.S., the United Kingdom, and the Canadian economies. Therefore, Liberia's congress should conduct a referendum and enact appropriate legislation to address this citizenship dilemma in the country's constitution (Section 4, Article 27.b). The Constitution of the Republic of Liberia (1986) states that "In order to preserve, foster and maintain the positive Liberian culture, values and character, only persons who are Negroes or of Negro descent shall qualify by birth or by naturalization to be citizens of Liberia" (Section 4, Article 27b, p. 10). This must be amended to allow diverse immigrants to contribute to the economy and become fully part of Liberia.

The constitutional prohibition of extending citizenship to entrepreneurial minority groups is based on fear that current citizens will lose land, which will degrade their economic status and reduce their political influence. The ideology is fostered by Article 27b of the constitution. The assertion that immigrants don't have Liberia's best interest at heart is also widespread among Liberian citizens. Gobewole (2016b) stated "The Lebanese have been publicly demonstrating, advocating, and expressing interest in participating in economic development and national politics... This information is critical, because economically advanced nations like the U.S. award citizenship based on birth in the country or on one's parents being naturalized citizens (Gobewole, 2016b). However, this makes no difference to Liberians who overwhelmingly reject citizenship for foreigners, including entrepreneurial minority groups.

To show this, it is necessary to analyze the Afrobarometer survey data on questionnaires about awarding citizenship to foreigners. This academic exercise will provide a better picture of the demographic groups (gender, residence, and ethnicity) that most oppose citizenship to other entrepreneurial minority groups. This opposition exists despite a lack of empirical evidence that existing citizens will experience adverse effects from awarding citizenship to entrepreneurial minorities. Amy Chua discussed the effect of discrimination and anti-citizenship against the Lebanese people, an entrepreneurial minority group, in Sierra Leone (Liberia's immediate neighbor), because of their acquired wealth from the diamond industry.

Sierra Leone attained independence in 1961. By that time the Lebanese already controlled most of the country's modern commerce, including the diamond trade, and were the objects of enormous popular resentment. In a familiar pattern, there followed a period of anti-Lebanese, anti-market policies in the name of the indigenous African majority. Restrictions were placed on Lebanese economic activity, and persons of 'European or Asiatic origin,' which included Lebanese, were denied citizenship. 'Africanization' and nationalization were in the air, and both markets and the Lebanese, less than 1 percent of the population, were in trouble (Chua, 2003, p.148).

In the name of ethnic and class solidarity, Sierra Leone effectively sabotaged its own economic future.

This is similar to the phenomenon occurring in Liberia with the debate about citizenship for entrepreneurial minority groups. Hopefully, this situation does not escalate into civil conflict among the population. Chua (2003) stated that "The Lebanese plutocrats—their diamond mines taken over by rebels—were the first to leave. The rest of the tiny Lebanese community soon followed. Sierra Leone's Lebanese population dropped from 20,000 to 2,000 as of 1999" (p.150). The exodus of Lebanese led to increased unemployment among Sierra Leoneans due to

closure of diamond mines, home service, street peddlers, and retail stores. These were jobs directly associated with Lebanese residence and business ownership in the nation.

### 6.2. Mandingos

Ironically, Mandingos (one of the targeted ethnic groups) have resided on the Grain Coast of Africa since prior to Liberia's establishment. They negotiated some of the earlier trade agreements with freed American Blacks upon their arrival in West Africa. Amos Sawyer discussed the critical role of Mandingos in assisting freed American Black settler society to implement their integration strategy and establish a nation in *The Emergence of Autocracy in Liberia*.

The failure of the settlements policy did not leave the integrationists without hope of building a great 'Negro State.' They continued to pursue relationships with indigenous communities by encouraging the work of missionaries and by attempting to find new approaches to integration that would be acceptable to the ruling elite. Their admiration for the Mandingo was always a point of departure. They continued their attempts to build bridges to the Mandingo not only for the promotion of trade and the securing of trade routes but also to promote the civilizing mission. The integrationists perceived a cultural similarity between themselves and the Mandingo. They were attracted by the 'sense of order' they perceived in Mandingo society because of its rigid hierarchical structure (Sawyer, 1992, p.195).

Unlike many other indigenous Africans, the Mandingos were favored by Americo-Liberians for their trade expertise.

The Mandingos' economic role underscores the argument that Mandingos (commonly interpreted as Muslims in Liberia) and other entrepreneurial minority groups should be evaluated on merit for Liberian citizenship. By contrast, the baseless argument against extending citizenship to other ethnic groups is discriminatory, exacerbates national poverty, and is creating substantial division among the nation's population. More important, the denial of citizenship to these ethnic minorities is a law, "Section 4, Article 27.b" in Liberia's Constitution, which requires legislation to be repealed. Gbewole discussed this dichotomy in Liberia's population in his book *Liberia's Political Economy: An Examination of Public Institutional Quality (Rule of Law, Democratic Accountability, and State Authority) Based on Citizens' Ethnic, Residence, and Gender Status*. "Liberia's citizenship law creates two classes of in its population: first, poor Liberians with all the political rights; and second, wealthy foreigners with no political or property rights but with an ability to bribe public officials to accomplish their objective. These situations are partly responsible for the institutional corruption that benefits Americo-Liberians or political elites at the expense of tribal Liberians (Gbewole, 2015). The legislature should at least enact a policy that gives citizenship rights to children of a foreigner and a Liberian" (Gbewole, 2016b). This atmosphere has developed into antagonism that leaves no room for civil discussion by opponents and proponents of the issue.

The critical point here is that Liberians have experienced the issue of "restricting citizenship to other ethnic groups" in the past. At the founding of the nation, the freed American Blacks denied citizenship to the indigenous tribal groups (Bassa, Dei, Loma, Vai, Kru, Kpelle, Grebo, Krahn, etc.) in their original homelands (Liebenow, 1987; Sawyer, 1992). The objective of this strategy was to increase the nation's territory without giving citizenship to the indigenous tribal groups. Liebenow (1987) states that "Several commercial treaties were negotiated in the 1850s by President Roberts with the Vai, Gola, and Loma peoples. Whether the agreements were broad or limited in scope, however, the settler government rapidly converted the treaties of friendship into Liberian deeds of ownership to the territory of the people involved" (p. 25).

The argument that entrepreneurial minorities (Lebanese, Mandingos, Nigerians, Indians, etc.) have enormous wealth which will be used to purchase large tracts of



land is unfounded. First, these individuals will not suddenly drop their successful businesses in retail, transportation, mining, construction, etc., which is what brought them to Liberia in the first place and made them wealthy, to begin prospecting in land. Instead, these individuals will continue to acquire wealth and influence through the pursue of their self-interest by producing commodities or providing services that customers demand at a market price. Smith (1776) stated that “It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest” (p.12).

If the underlying argument is that the entrepreneurial minorities will want to acquire political power or influence, they can simply continue to do what are currently doing, bribing public officials to accomplish their political and economic objectives. Therefore, Liberian society needs to crack down on public corruption, not on specific ethnic groups. Second, Liberian citizens’ fear that new immigrants (entrepreneurial minorities) will acquired their land is misplaced. They (Liberian citizens) should be more concerned about their president’s authority to sell customary (tribal) and public land. This is where the nation’s largest holding of land is and historically reveals that previous and recent presidents have illegally grabbed these lands, selling them to friends and relatives, as well as placing them into concession contracts with international companies (Firestone, Bong Mines Company, LAMCO-JV, etc.) for long periods (99 years in the case of Firestone).

### 6.3. Citizenship extension miscalculation

Liberia has a history of denying some ethnic groups citizenship (Liebenow, 1987). This discrimination was partly responsible for Liberia losing one-third of its original land mass to France and Britain during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The freed American blacks wanted land to settle their migrating populations (consisting of former American slave, Barbados, and recaptured Africans “Congos” from slave ships), which led to them claiming communities’ land. However, the freed American blacks did not integrate or include indigenous tribal populations as citizen until the presidency of Arthur Barclay in 1904 (Harris, 2012). Liebenow (1987) stated that “In all, the British and French gained control of more than a third of the hinterland once claimed by Americo-Liberians” (p.28). The American Colonization Society, the organization that financed and settle freed blacks on the West Coast of Africa, established a colony in the sub-region in 1821. The free American black colonists transformed the colony into a nation in 1847, but denied the indigenous people that inhabited the land citizenship. This discrimination was only eliminated because British and French colonists in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century continued to take land originally claimed by the freed blacks. They justified their action by claiming that the original tribal occupants were not citizens of Liberia. Eventually, the Americo-Liberian government realized that, to protect their nation’s sovereignty, it was beneficial to make the indigenous tribal groups citizens. J. Gus Liebenow discussed the episode: “Despite the claims on tribal labor, neither initial Liberian legislation nor the constitution of 1847 recognized the taxed tribal person as a citizen. Only the threat of European incursions into the hinterland compelled President Arthur Barclay in 1904 to extend citizenship to the tribal residents of the interior as proof of the ‘effectiveness’ of Liberia’s claim to the district adjacent to Sierra Leone” (Liebenow, 1987).

In other words, they were only interested in augmenting their territory not their population. This action preserved Liberia’s current territorial limits to 43 million square miles.

The discriminatory practice was supported by Section 13, Article V of Liberia’s Constitution. This law in the Constitution of the Republic of Liberia (1847) stated that “The great object of forming these colonies, being to provide a home for the dispersed and oppressed children of Africa, and to regenerate and enlighten this benighted continent, None but persons of color shall be admitted to citizenship in this Republic” (Section 13, Article V). The revision of a clause from “persons of color” in “Section 13, Article V” to “Negroes or persons of Negro decent” in

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“Section 3, Article 27b” partly saved Liberia from further reduction in its territorial square mileage. The term “Negro” referred to “indigenous dark-skinned peoples of Africa” or “a person having some African ancestors” ([Webster’s New World, 2002](#)). On the other hand, the term “person of color” is used primarily in the United Kingdom and the United States to describe people who are non-white or not of European (Caucasian) decent. Stated differently, the former refers mainly to Sub-Saharan African while the latter refer to freed American and British blacks, although “person of color” often also covers Asian, Latino, and other backgrounds. Some of these individuals repatriated to West Africa (today’s Liberia and Sierra Leone) during the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. In other words, the Americo-Liberian government policy of denying indigenous tribal people citizenship partly cost Liberia one-third of the territory that it could have possessed. These are the people Liberia’s 1847 constitution is referring to.

Nevertheless, the Americo-Liberian settlers grabbed as much land as possible upon their arrival in West Africa. Gobewole discussed the Freed American Blacks approach to acquiring tribal land in his book *Liberia’s Political Economy*. “The freed American blacks claimed territories in the interior of the subregion (Grain Coast) based on government-commissioned “journeys of exploration” (discovery) and negotiated “treaties of friendship” with tribal groups, primarily the Vai, Gola, and Loma, converted into ‘Liberian deed[s] of ownership to the territory of the people involved’ ([Liebenow, 1987](#)). This practice led to freed American blacks claiming the coastline from Sherbro Island in the west, where the first settlers made landfall, to San Pedro River east” ([Gobewole, 2016b](#)).



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The Liberian Map in Figure 1 was adapted from the Worldatlas.com to show land (dark shaded area) that the freed American Blacks settled and originally claimed on Africa's west coast.

This demand for land was necessary to provide living accommodation and acres for Liberia's growing population. As a result, the freed American Blacks were not interested in augmenting their population, or increasing their citizenship, with indigenous tribal people. Nevertheless, freed American Blacks wanted indigenous tribal property's use value. However, the policy of denying citizenship to indigenous people was changed once Europeans started demanding more of Liberia's claimed territory. Gbewole discussed the resolution of this land dispute.

These threats compelled Liberia's government, the Americo-Liberian oligarchy, to seek 'official political protection' from the U.S. in 1893 and 1908, which was rejected by the American government (Kraaij, 1983; Liebenow, 1987; Pham, 2004). Therefore, Liberia was pressured in the Treaty of 1885 to concede the region west of the Mano River to Britain, in the Treaty of 1892 to concede fifty miles of coast land [between the Cavalla and San Pedro rivers] to France, and in the Treaty of 1907 to concede 'a vast strip of land along the Guinea and Ivory Coast borders,' which resulted in Liberia losing over a third of its original claims of the hinterland (Liebenow, 1987; Pham, 2004). The British argued that their recognition of Liberia's sovereignty in 1848 limited its boundary to the Mano River, while the French recognized Liberia's territory west of the Cavalla River and paid 25,000 francs for the area east (Pham, 2004). The Republic of Liberia had 43,000 square miles (Gbewole, 2016b, p.131).



The map (light shaded area) of Liberia in Figure-2 shows the entity that finally is the nation.

In other words, making indigenous people citizens made Americo-Liberians better off by giving them access to more land, even though they were basically transferring customary (tribal) land to public land and then to private land for

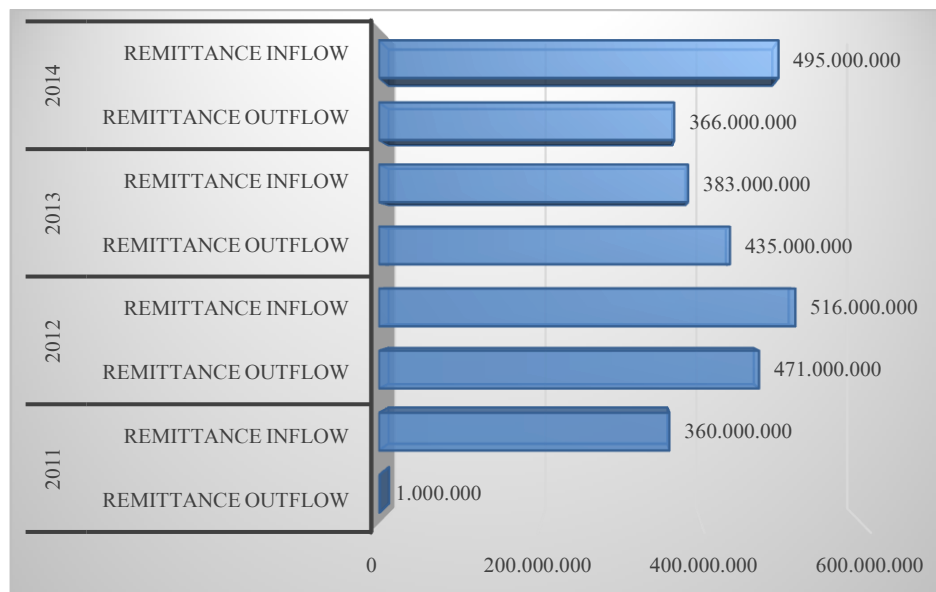


themselves (Gobewole, 2016b). The Americo-Liberian oligarchy's political and economic status were not affected, as opponents to extending citizenship are suggesting will happen today. In fact, this action perpetuated the opposite effect. President Tubman specifically design a code of law in 1956 to denial tribal people and their communities' property ownership of the land they had inhabited from the inception of Liberia to keep them (tribal or indigenous people) as second class citizens (Pham, 2004). This fact is corroborated by Harris' (2012) statement that "Under both systems, the Americo-Liberians made it very difficult over the first 100 years of independence for indigenes to attain positions of wealth or power, at least within the relatively affluent settler society" (p.46). Pham discussed how Americo-Liberians implemented this legal strategy: "While the legal system discriminated against indigenous communities with regard to land holdings, it encouraged, in the name of increasing a 'civilized' settler presence in the interior, politically connected members of the Americo-Liberian elite to acquire vast estates—some as large as 20,000 acres—for the paltry rent of fifty cents per acre. As if to add salt to the wounds, these plantation owners, many of whom were absentees, were exempted from the taxes and other imposts collected by the district commissioners" (Pham, 2004).

This experience should serve as a teachable moment for proponents of denying citizenship to entrepreneurial minority groups, notably Lebanese, Mandingos, Liberian dual citizens, Westerners, and Nigerians, who are the wealthiest of Liberia's population. The nation can benefit from their wealth, which is currently being exported as remittance to home countries, by giving them citizenship.

## 7. Essential investment resources

The Constitution of the Republic of Liberia, "Section 3, Article 27b," is minimizing available resources for new investment in the nation. This phenomenon exists because of the law that denies entrepreneurial minority groups access to citizenship, which encourages them to transfer large amount of their earnings (as remittances) to their nations of origin (Gobewole, 2016b). Paye-Layleh (2005) stated that "Because they are not citizens, they are not allowed to own land—one reason why Lebanese routinely transfer abroad huge amounts of money generated in Liberia" (p.1). This is a logical action, because Liberia is giving these individuals no incentive (citizenship) for reinvesting their wealth in the country's economy.



Graph 6.  
Liberia Remittance Statistics

Graph 6 reveals that most annual remittance income (or Inflow) to Liberia is sent back out (or Outflow) to other nations (predominately by entrepreneurial minority groups). For example, the total remittances sent from Liberia between 2010 and 2015 to Nigeria were \$73 million, with remittances to Cote d'Ivoire of \$51 million, Ghana \$14 million, Lebanon \$7 million, Guinea \$5 million, and India \$3 million. In other words, the financial resources acquired through remittances, and in some cases natural resource revenue, are adding minimum value to Liberia's economy (specifically between 2011 and 2015). A measure of resources (wealth) transferred from Liberia is exhibited in remittances statistics. The USD Explorer Website in 2018 revealed that remittance inflow and outflow from Liberia were about \$360 million and \$1 million, respectively, in 2011, \$516 million and \$471 million in 2012, \$383 million and \$435 million in 2013, and \$495 million and \$366 million in 2014 respectively. The Liberian economy experience a net gain of \$382 million from remittance transactions during that period partly due to the Liberian diaspora.

This begs the question, "why is a poor country like Liberia allowing so much essential, valuable, and potential investment resources to be transfer from their country"? The Liberian government should institute policies, or enact laws, to retain these entrepreneurs and their wealth, because they are critical to establishing domestic firms, enhancing citizens' productive capability, fostering economic growth, and improving citizens' standard of living (Gobewole, 2016b). Such a policy will lead to Liberia transforming its industrial structure, protecting its infant industries, and securing high-tech employment for its citizens. Gobewole (2016b) stated that "Liberian legislators should enact policies that require government to subsidize domestic industries, specifically agriculture and mining, control commodities exports, minimize concession contracts given to foreign companies, and restrict foreign consumer goods imports" (p.197). The state of a nation's economy is best revealed in its citizen's job functions (division of labor). Most important to underscore is that citizens' role in a society is based on their skill set, the demand for it, and the competition for it. In other words, more specialization (productive capability) in a nation's labor force leads to industrialization of its domestic firms, increases in its productivity, and high growth in its economy (Gobewole, 2016b; Smith, 1776).

These factors could support the creation and development of a civil society in Liberia. Gobewole discussed this policy effect: "This approach will allow Liberia to evolve into a modern state with meritocracy while gradually eradicating the patrimonialism that has made its public official perpetually corrupt" (Fukuyama, 2014; Gobewole, 2015).

This phenomenon has other implication for developing nations, such as Liberia, like the need for enhanced rule of law, democratic accountability, and state authority (Fukuyama, 2014). Gobewole (2016b) stated that "The strengthening of these institutions will help Liberia to stabilize, legitimize, and regulate its currency, capital, and labor markets effectively. This will allow it to ignite economic growth and sustainable development to improve Liberians' standard of living" (p.162), thereby gradually discouraging patronage practices and encouraging a modern meritocratic state to foster effective democratization of Liberian public institutions. Francis Fukuyama indicated that such a transition is more difficult than transforming from authoritarianism to democracy (Fukuyama, 2014). However, the transformation to a modern state is essential for Liberia to advance its economy. Furthermore, extending citizenship to Lebanese, Mandingos, and Indians is a critical first step to economic development in Liberia.

Some advanced countries like North America, Britain, and Canada have industrial policies for admitting new immigrants and putting them on a path to citizenship. The following are some of the programs, years of utilization, and number of immigrants who have benefited in the United States: (A) Family-Based Immigration Policy gave 804,793 people permanent residence in 2016, (B) Employment-Based Green Cards gave 137,893 individuals jobs in 2016, (C)



Diversity Visa Program gave 50,000 people green cards each year, and (D) Temporary Protected Status gave jobs to approximately 320,000 people from ten nations (including African countries like Somalia, Sudan, and South Sudan) (Krogstad & Gonzalez-Barrera, 2017). Temporary Protected Status is particularly important because it provides assistance to citizens of countries that encountered war and natural disasters, including earthquakes, landslides, floods, and hurricanes; however, the U.S. government is planning to eliminate the Temporary Protected Status for some countries soon. Krogstad *et. al.*, (2017) state that “Many are expected to lose their benefits in 2018 and 2019. The Trump administration has said it will not renew the program for people from El Salvador, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Sudan who together account for about 75% of enrolled immigrants” (p. 5). Still, the fact remains that advanced countries’ immigration laws generally encourage and invite new immigrants from around the world to leverage their talents.

Similar to the United States, the British have developed a “Five Tier Points Based Immigration System” for awarding Temporary Worker, Permanent Residence, and United Kingdom (UK) citizenship to new immigrants. The fifth tier contains sub-categories that address temporary workers status for “creative and sporting, charity, religious workers, and youth mobility schemes which enable about 55,000 young people every year to work in the UK... from countries that have reciprocal arrangements with the UK” (UK Immigration, 2018). However, this paper is most concerned with the law (Tier 1- Exceptional Talent-Visa) that provides legal status for investors, entrepreneurs, and professionals with high intellectual worth that migrate to the UK from outside the European Economic Area, an area covered under the agreement of persons, goods, services, and capitals within the single European market. The UK Immigration website explained Tier 1-Exceptional Talent-Visa: “In support of the changes announced in the Autumn Budget2017, the number of Tier 1Exceptional Talent visas allocated annually is being doubled to 2,000. The additional 1,000 visas will be held separately, in an unallocated pool draw on a first come, first served basis. Exceptional talent visa holders [but not exceptional promise visa holders] are also now permitted to qualify for ILR after three years” (Morris, 2018). The holders of Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) are eligible to apply for UK citizenship after twelve months (or longer), for those over eighteen years of age who have resided in Britain for at least five years. In Canada acquiring citizenship is pretty straightforward. The immigration law indicates that “As a general principle a person may apply for Canadian Citizenship provided he/she is a permanent resident of Canada for more than three years” (*Canadian Immigration Policy, Rules and Regulations*, 2018). As in the United States, Canada and the UK provide an organized, relatively transparent process for incorporating large numbers of immigrants.

This strategy of extending citizenship to new immigrants has partly led to their growth for the United States, the UK, and Canada. Notably, the companies founded by immigrants and refugees to the United States are among leading global corporations and innovators.

**Table 1. 10 Largest U.S. companies founded by immigrants**

United States Company	Immigrant Founder	Country of Origin	2016 Annual Revenue	Employees
Tesla Inc.	Elon Musk	South Africa	10 billion	33,000
Google	Sergey Brin	Former Soviet Union	99.28 billion	72,000
Intel Inc.	Andrew Grove	Hungary	61.7 billion	106,000
eBay Inc.	Pierre Omidyar	Iran	9.16 billion	12,600
Chobani	Hamdi Ulukaya	Turkey	2 billion	2,000
Kohl's Corp	Maxwell Kohl	Poland	18.52 billion	138,00

Table 1 include Tesla Inc. founded by Elon Musk of South Africa, Google founded by Sergey Brin from the former Soviet Union, Intel Inc. founded by Andrew Grove of Hungary, eBay Inc. founded by Pierre Omidyar of Iran (son of Iranian immigrants), Chobani founded by Hamdi Ulukaya of Turkey, and Kohl's

Corp founded by Maxwell Kohl of Poland. Wade Thiel (2017) stated that “There are about 2.9 million entrepreneurs in the U.S. who are foreign born. These entrepreneurs’ companies accounted for roughly \$65 billion in business income in 2014” (p.2). The Liberian people can learn from North America’s experience that entrepreneurial minority group contribute mightily to their economy’s development if they are giving appropriate incentives and opportunity to attain citizenship.

## **8. Conclusion**

This situation began to change with the extension of citizenship to the 16 indigenous tribes in 1904. Even though the French and British colonialist encroachment on Liberia’s territory compelled the Americo-Liberian Oligarchy to act (Liebenow, 1987; Sawyer, 1992), the fact remains that the Americo-Liberian oligarchy became better off politically and economically and gained more territory and natural resources with the addition of tribal communities’ land. In other words, the extension of citizenship to indigenous tribal people stopped British and French colonialist from taking any more land from Liberia.

As a result, Liberian citizens and other West African nations should not be afraid of awarding citizenship to entrepreneurial Lebanese, Mandingos, Nigerians, Liberian dual citizens, and Indians, among other nationalities. This action would give Liberia access to a large pool of financial resources (remittance that is currently flowing out of the country) to revitalize its economy. In addition, entrepreneurial minority groups, other nationalities, or people with dual citizenship who acquire Liberian citizenship and political rights will have an incentive to invest more in Liberia’s economy. This win-win situation will develop trust among the populations, create collaborative working relationships, increase domestic manufacturing firms, and enhance citizens’ productive capability. These activities are the prerequisite for high-tech job creation (with better pay and permanent employment), improved standard of living, formation of a strong civil society, and establishment of a modern state (Gobewole, 2016b). A gradual accomplishment of citizenship for these groups will assist Liberia’s government in minimizing patronage practices and foster democratization of its public institutions, in addition to providing a vigorous economic boost.

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